

Sermon for May 3, 2020

BMZ Church

Series: RelationSHIPS

Text: I Corinthians 7:1-9, Genesis 2, John 17:21

Title: "DATESHIP: The Dating Game"

Introduction: Good morning BMZ! So glad you're here as we CONTINUE with our series, "**RelationSHIPS!**". The IDEA behind this = We are ALL in RELATIONSHIPS and sometimes we STRUGGLE. God CREATED us to be IN RELATIONSHIPS and wants them to be the BEST they can be! It STARTS with a RELATIONSHIP with GOD through our LORD JESUS ... then, the REST of our RELATIONSHIPS get BETTER!

Listen, God has A WAY He wants us to be IN RELATIONSHIP with HIM and with His CREATED PEOPLE. Our lives revolve around relationships, whether it's FAMILY, WORK, FRIEND or ROMANTIC. God has a PLAN!

**Let me SAY this ONE MORE TIME. This was all GOD'S IDEA, AND, God knows how relationships work BEST. God holds the back-of-the-book answer key!**

IF you haven't already, GRAB your MESSAGE NOTES ... Hit the "TAKE NOTES" Button on the right/below the screen. Also, Hit the BUTTON that says "CONNECTION CARD" ... *You will see there are blanks to fill in ... Please take the time to do so. Write down whatever else you think is important to you and your faith journey. After worship, SEND your CONNECTION CARD and FILE your MESSAGE NOTES DIGITALLY or PAPERLY. Please Re-read the Scripture and the notes to keep growing and learning. For those of you on-line, you can go to our website, [www.bmzchurch.org](http://www.bmzchurch.org) ... LET'S PRAY!*

Today, SINGLENESS and DATING... Listen, the whole "**single / dating / let's just be friends**" scene is more COMPLICATED than at any other time in history. The dating scene is MORE COMPLEX as we DEAL with the DYNAMICS of ONLINE DATING and MATCHING SITES... Back in the day you'd MARRY the LOCAL GUY or GIRL you got along with best. Now, people can date and marry women and men from around the world! Really COOL, but COMPLEX!

With the complexity of the dating scene today, it's easy to LOSE TRACTION in those relationships ... easy to SLIP UP and have multiple relationships DISAPPEAR.

**One reason it's so difficult to date these days is because our thinking about dating, love and romance have been twisted by our society, our culture, our media presence to the point that we are NOT AT ALL SURE what is RIGHT or WRONG.**

TODAY is about DATING...Don't CHECK OUT if you are NOT DATING...

**DATING: TWO PROBLEMS, TWO SOLUTIONS and a COUPLE COMMENTS!**

**Problem #1: Believing Being MARRIED is NORMAL**

We live in a society where "MARRIED is NORMAL". IMPLYING, maybe, if you're NOT married, you are "ABNORMAL". Listen, MARRIAGE (one man and one woman) is a HUGE part of GOD'S PLAN ... BUT, God also has a HUGE PLAN for SINGLE people as well! (REPEAT!)

The BIBLE talks HIGHLY, NOT only of MARRIAGE, but of SINGLENESS. Did you know that? In our SCRIPTURE for today, Paul is writing a letter to a Church HE STARTED in a city called, "CORINTH". Corinth is RELEVANT to our situation today. CORINTH was a MAIN PORT CITY on the Mediterranean Sea. MEANING there were a bunch of SAILORS and MERCHANTS, etc. coming through town.

CORINTH was like the “LAS VEGAS” of the Mediterranean. *“What happens in Corinth; stays in Corinth”*. Corinth had plenty of prostitutes and sexual temptation ... and Paul DECIDED to START a CHURCH there.

Then Paul had to address WHAT to DO with all TEMPTATIONS people dealt with as they ATTEMPTED to FOLLOW God ... sounds like this might speak to us, huh?

If you have your Bible HANDY ... *1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 7:7-9 = <sup>7</sup> But I wish everyone were single, just as I am. Yet each person has a special gift from God, of one kind or another. <sup>8</sup> So I say to those who aren't married and to widows—it's better to stay unmarried, just as I am. <sup>9</sup> But if they can't control themselves, they should go ahead and marry. It's better to marry than to burn with lust. <sup>1</sup>*

Did you catch VERSE 7? *“But God gives to some ... the GIFT of SINGLENESSE.”* It's a GIFT? Can we RETURN IT? Is there a RECEIPT? But THAT is what PAUL says ... it's GOOD to be SINGLE! If you have a CHOICE and you can HANDLE IT ... STAY SINGLE! Why? WHY would PAUL ENCOURAGE people to STAY SINGLE?

Okay ... before we go any further, let me ask a “CHURCH QUESTION” (means you know the right answer): The two CENTRAL people in the New Testament are PAUL and ... \_\_\_\_\_ (JESUS). Right! And PAUL wants to CENTER HIS LIFE on JESUS ... he wants to be as much LIKE JESUS as POSSIBLE (and Paul writes this).

SECOND QUESTION: What is ONE CHARACTER QUALITY Paul and Jesus SHARE? Right! Both SINGLE!

BIGGER QUESTION ... a WORLD-VIEW question (probably don't think about it often, but IT DRIVES a LOT of WHAT we DO): WHAT does HUMANITY LOOK LIKE look like at its BEST? Aren't we ALL WORKING TOWARD what we think is the BEST WAY to live this life? HOW can we GET the MOST out of THIS LIFE?

MANY PEOPLE fall back on whatever our CULTURE SAYS is a GOOD LIFE! Full of the RIGHT CLOTHES / CAR / BODY-TYPE / EXPERIENCES / BEER, etc. IF you have these THINGS MEDIA ADVERTISES, you will experience a FULL LIFE!

I hope most of you have figured this one out ... THOSE are SALESPEOPLE trying to SELL PRODUCT to MAKE MONEY.

Okay, another CHURCH QUESTION: WHAT does HUMANITY LOOK LIKE at its BEST / FULLEST? Answer: JESUS! The Church has had the same answer for 2,000 years ... FULL/ RICH LIFE means we are as much LIKE as POSSIBLE ... Christianity! Followers of Christ. Don't miss this: JESUS LIFE is HUMANITY at its BEST! And Jesus was SINGLE ... and CELIBATE!

I KNOW SOME who are SINGLE who THINK they are MISSING OUT on LIFE ... and won't EXPERIENCE FULL LIFE until they're MARRIED. Don't buy it! That is a LIE! It's a MYTH! You are in POSITION ... in the SAME LEAGUE as JESUS and PAUL to EXPERIENCE a FULL LIFE!

Some of you have the “GIFT of SINGLENESSE”. TAKE ADVANTAGE and serve God from WHO you ARE and WHERE you are AT! Paul never had to ask PERMISSION to GO on a MISSION TRIP for a FEW YEARS to START CHURCHES!

BUT, SOME of you do NOT have the “GIFT of SINGLENESSE” BUT are STILL SINGLE. MEANING you are ATTEMPTING to DATE. That gets us to our SECOND PROBLEM with DATING... #2 =

## **Problem #2: Accepting the SOP (Standard Operating Procedure) in the ADS (American Dating System)**

Okay, how many of you love PIZZA? ICE CREAM? How many of you love your MOM? How many of you love a certain FOOTBALL TEAM? How many of you love your SPOUSE? Are all THOSE the SAME KIND of LOVE? I hope you DON'T love PIZZA and GRANDMA the same way!

C.S. Lewis wrote a book called "THE FOUR LOVES" that explains the different kinds of love the Greek language (New Testament language) used:

### **FOUR LOVES:**

#1 = EROS – sexual attraction, "Erotic"

#2 = STORGE – Affection, WARM FEELINGS, a SENSE of BELONGING, AN OBJECT / SONG that makes you FEEL like EVERYTHING will be OKAY. SENTIMENTALITY...

#3 = PHILEO – Philadelphia is the "City of BROTHERLY LOVE". This is the "I LOVE YOU, MAN" feeling. A friendship with someone with SIMILAR INTERESTS and IDEAS ... a real connection.

#4 = AGAPE – UNCONDITIONAL Love. You CAN'T LOSE it or EARN it. It says, *"I will put your needs/interests as a higher priority than my own. It doesn't matter how I 'FEEL', I am committed to loving you no matter what happens."*

Interesting HISTORY on the word "AGAPE". Before Jesus, this was a generic meaning of LOVE, but AFTER JESUS, the NT writers used an EXISTING WORD to DESCRIBE a NEW KIND of LOVE Jesus showed ... unconditional, sacrificial, *"It's not about Me!"* kind of LOVE. People had NEVER SEEN the kind of love Jesus SHOWED and they NEEDED a WORD to DESCRIBE unconditional, AGAPE LOVE.

AGAPE is LOVE GOD SHOWS to US NO MATTER WHAT we DO / THINK / HOW we ACT. AGAPE love is what GOD DOES FOR US by SENDING His SON to DIE a PHYSICAL DEATH on a CROSS for our SINS while WE are IGNORING GOD with our WORDS and ACTIONS ... while we're FLIPPING God OFF!

AGAPE = There is NOTHING you can DO to make GOD LOVE YOU MORE or LESS. You are STUCK with GOD'S LOVE. It's up to US to DECIDE IF we will LOVE God BACK or keep FLIPPING Him OFF with our WORDS / ATTITUDE / ACTIONS.

So, 4 LOVES ... This is HOW the SOP of the ADS ORDERS these 4 LOVES: Let's say a GIRL walks into a ROOM and a FEW GUYS are there. What happens? The RADAR goes UP ... ANY PROSPECTS? Then, the GIRL DECIDES WHO to TALK TO. What is the FILTERING SYSTEM? Can we be HONEST? It's a combination of "STORGE" and "EROS" ... who's the HOTTIE and who's the NOTTIE?

STARTING POINT: is he CUTE ENOUGH? THEN, you go after "STORGE". TALK a little. FLIRT a little ... ANY SPARKS? Any EMOTIONAL EXCITEMENT? So, BASED on "EROS" and "STORGE", you decide IF HE is WORTH PURSUING.

In the SOP of the ADS, MANY try to CALCULATE by "STORGE" and "EROS" if they are COMPATIBLE. BASED on PHYSICAL ATTRACTION and EXPERIMENTING (UPI = Unlimited Physical Interaction ... there are kids in the room) ... BY THOSE we DECIDE if we should PURSUE a RELATIONSHIP.

If enough is happening in Storge and Eros, you PURSUE a "RELATIONSHIP" ... START PURSUING the friendship part (PHILEO). Now, we are getting serious.

In the ADS, often, people have UPI BEFORE they work on FRIENDSHIP. In the ADS, very SELDOM does AGAPE even SHOW UP on RADAR! WHY NOT? Because in the ADS the individuals are trying to FIND OUT if this RELATIONSHIP is going to MEET MY NEEDS / WANTS / DESIRES. The idea is: IF I GIVE OUT what THEY WANT, I'd better GET BACK what I NEED!

In the ADS, EVERYONE is KEEPING SCORE of WHO has DONE WHAT and IS IT FAIR? IF it is NOT FAIR or ONE or BOTH are NOT GETTING what they THINK they DESERVE, then they GIVE UP on the RELATIONSHIP! In the ADS, AGAPE LOVE is NOT EVEN CONSIDERED.

If YOU are SINGLE, and you THINK this ADS thing is NOT WORKING for YOU ... guess what? GOD OFFERS a COUPLE SOLUTIONS to the PROBLEMS!

### **Solution #1 = Get the ORDER Right**

FOLLOW GOD'S ORDER ... Shift the 4 LOVES around. EROS (UPI), which is OFTEN the ADS 1<sup>st</sup> consideration, SHIFTS to a SAFE PLACE ... LAST PLACE. You kind of knew that was coming, didn't you? That does NOT mean EROS DISAPPEARS. If you are NOT PHYSICALLY ATTRACTED, that'll lead to MORE PROBLEMS.

There is a REASON for SHIFTING EROS to LAST PLACE ... BECAUSE the CHRISTIAN view of UPI is a DIFFERENT than the ADS. The CHRISTIAN view of UPI is VERY HIGH ... It's NOT taken LIGHTLY. It's SPECIAL. It's not a recreational sport. The ADS has a VERY LOW VIEW of UPI. As Christians, it is an AMAZING GIFT from God that GOD (when God invented / created it) INTENDED to SOLIDIFY / CEMENT / GORILLA GLUE an EXISTING PHILEO relationship TOGETHER...

UPI is intended to happen within "EMOTIONAL UNION", "INTELLECTUAL UNION", "RELATIONAL UNION", "SPIRITUAL UNION" and "LEGAL UNION". UPI is NOT ONENESS in just a PHYSICAL WAY ... That is a LOW VIEW of UPI. God's GIFT of UPI is MULTI-DIMENSIONAL and WRAPS us UP together EMOTIONALLY, RELATIONALLY and SPIRITUALLY.

UPI is INTENDED to be IN CONTEXT ... WITHIN something CALLED...

### **Solution #2 = "TLC" = TOTAL LIFE COMMITMENT**

The BIBLE CALLS THIS: "COVENANT". TLC is a MARRIAGE COVENANT (an agreement in front of God)! UPI was NOT CREATED by GOD to BE a STAND-ALONE EXPERIENCE. It was MEANT to BE COVENANT CEMENT.

UPI is a BEAUTIFUL GIFT to CEMENT a LIFE-LONG COMMITMENT on MULTIPLE LEVELS to ANOTHER PERSON. That is GOD'S INTENT ... The ADS has CHEAPENED what GOD INTENDED.

God intended UPI to be GORILLA GLUE! That's why it HURTS so BADLY if you have BEEN with SOMEONE you are NOT MARRIED to and the RELATIONSHIP ENDS. COUNTRY SONGS tell us ... *"That didn't hurt ... good riddance!"* Keep trying to CONVINCe YOURSELF. Good LUCK! Listen, UPI is MEANT to CEMENT us to the ONE we LOVE for a LIFETIME! It HURTS US and MANY OTHERS if we MISUSE the GIFT!

So, where do Christians start? At the BEGINNING ... Genesis 2:18, 21-24 = *<sup>18</sup> Then the LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper who is just right for him." <sup>21</sup> So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep. While the man slept, the LORD God took out one of the man's ribs and closed up the opening. <sup>22</sup> Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib, and he*

brought her to the man. <sup>23</sup> “At last!” the man exclaimed. “This one is bone from my bone, and flesh from my flesh! She will be called ‘woman,’ because she was taken from ‘man.’” <sup>24</sup> This explains why a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one. <sup>2</sup> “It is not good for man to be alone.” God made a woman and Adam started writing poetry, “At last! Bone from my bone and flesh from my flesh...”

God’s talking about ONENESS! As Christians we START with PHILEO. We START as FRIENDS. MARRIEDS = If your SPOUSE is NOT your FRIEND, your ‘CHECK ENGINE’ light should have just COME ON. More in a couple weeks!

**God wants you to have someone you can face the world with. Someone who will be a reminder to you, you’re never alone and God was good enough to bless you with that person... designed to be your spouse!**

FRIENDSHIP (Phileo) is the BACKBONE to the Christian Dating System. According to GOD’S PLAN ... When you WALK INTO a room, the QUESTION IS: **“Which one of these could potentially be a life-long friend?”** You CAN’T ANSWER that in the first few minutes. It takes TIME ...

START with PHILEO and build a FRIENDSHIP. THEN, find out if STORGE develops (AFFECTION ... I want to HANG AROUND with THEM. We have SIMILAR INTERESTS ... I sense some CHEMISTRY and FEEL ROMANTIC EVEN...

AFTER PHILEO and STORGE grow STRONGER, you find you are WILLING to LOVE that person and you would DO ANYTHING FOR THEM.

That’s AGAPE LOVE KICKING IN ... Get MARRIED and COMMIT to THEM in FRONT of GOD ... CEMENT the RELATIONSHIP!

Please understand this is NOT a RIGID STEP-BY-STEP program. You can’t map it out ... **“Phileo has started, so in about a month we will start in with Storge and then August 10<sup>th</sup> is AGAPE DAY! Oh, which means by Christmas EROS can go CRAZY!”**

That leads us to ANOTHER potential PROBLEM ... BELIEVING MARRIAGE WILL BE MY ULTIMATE FULFILLMENT! We THINK: If I can just find the right person... my life will be complete (**“You complete me...” “You had me at ‘hello!’”**). That’s a MOVIE with an ADS SCRIPT WRITER!

Remember LAST WEEK we talked about LETTING our FRIENDS OFF the HOOK because they would NEVER be PERFECT? Sometimes we think our SPOUSE is the ONE WHO will COMPLETE US and BRING PURE JOY and HAPPINESS. STOP!

ONLY JESUS can SAVE. STOP expecting your SPOUSE to do it! Often, we THINK our SPOUSE will MAKE UP for ALL that’s been MISSING in LIFE!

### **Comment #1 = HOME Life vs. LOVE Life**

There are certain things HUMANS NEED during our FORMATIVE YEARS at HOME. STUDIES show to be a WELL-BALANCED HUMAN, we need consistent and ongoing: RESPECT, ENCOURAGEMENT, COMFORT, SUPPORT, SECURITY, APPROVAL, ACCEPTANCE, and WELL-MODELED CONFLICT RESOLUTION. ... I’m sure we ALL walked out of our homes with ALL THAT, right?

Most ADULTS are STILL LOOKING for these and WHEN we FALL in LOVE, we WONDER ... **“ARE YOU GOING to GIVE me: RESPECT, ENCOURAGEMENT, COMFORT, APPROVAL, and SUPPORT, or ARE you just PRETTY?”**

<sup>2</sup> Tyndale House Publishers. (2015). *Holy Bible, New Living Translation* (Ge 2:18-24). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

That's WHY many MARRIAGES feel like a stranglehold. Our SPOUSE is TRYING to GET OUT of US what they NEEDED GROWING UP and ONCE we MARRY ... we THINK it's what we DESERVE! ***"You owe me all these things I need!"*** More about this in a COUPLE weeks...

**Comment #2 = What I Look Like at My Best = JESUS**

I had a sociology professor in college who taught me about marriage. Professor GOULD said something profound ... ***"Instead of LOOKING FOR the right person to marry, we need to be working on BECOMING the right person to marry."***

John 17:21 = <sup>21</sup> *I pray that they will all be one, just as you and I are one—as you are in me, Father, and I am in you. And may they be in us so that the world will believe you sent me.* <sup>3</sup> What do I look like at my best? Like JESUS. Whether that is SINGLE, DATING or MARRIED, I need to continue to build my relationship with Jesus Christ! Seek FIRST the KINGDOM and ALL YOUR RELATIONSHIPS will BE BETTER!

Wherever you are today, be encouraged. God wants what is best for you... You were designed for a purpose ... even in your RELATIONSHIPS!

Let's Pray!

Next Steps: *Memorize John 17:21*  
*Read John 17 and 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 7*  
*I will take*  
*Invite Someone to attend BMZ Church Online next week for Mother's Day!*

## Hosting (Closing)

HEY, it has been a GREAT DAY here at BMZ... Glad you've been here with us!  
In a moment, we are going to RECEIVE the OFFERING so please take this  
time to finish COMPLETING any information

- Or NEXT STEPS on your CONNECTION CARD (**FULLY FILLED OUT!!**)
- AND when our ushers come around to RECEIVE our OFFERING
- You can drop that card in the offering basket.

### **IF you are a First-Time Guest with us today**

We are so glad you joined us ... And we have a GIFT for you.  
It's this book "**UNSHAKABLE**" and it's at the BACK TABLE / By the DOORS...

- all you need to do is HIT "**SEND**" your COMPLETED Connection Card

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As our ushers GET READY to come forward

- I just want to remind you that ... STEWARDSHIP is DISCIPLESHIP ... we RECEIVE an OFFERING EVERY Sunday BECAUSE it's BIBLICAL ... AND, it HELPS us GROW in our FAITH!
- STEWARDSHIP VERSE ... PSALM 139:1 = *O Lord, you have examined my heart and know everything about me.*
- FIRST of our EARNINGS go back to the ONE who Blessed us in the 1<sup>st</sup> place! That's why WE/I do Automated Giving! I get paid ... the TITHE comes OUT FIRST!
- God's plan for BUILDING His Church was through TITHING and GIVING of the FOLLOWERS ... Share the GOOD NEWS! To REFRESH OTHERS!
- As Developing Followers of Jesus Christ, WE need to KNOW what the BIBLE says about GIVING ... NOT just what we THINK it should say.
- **MONEY is a HEART ISSUE.** And, GOD wants what is BEST for your HEART! Listen, if GOD LOVES US so much that HE is willing to GIVE UP His OWN SON FOR US, WHY would GOD LEAD us ASTRAY in FINANCES?!  
USHERS ...
- Next Week: "**The MOTHERSHIP as we continue 'RelationSHIPS'!**"

*"Truth without Grace is Fundamentalism (Brutality). Grace without Truth is Sentimentalism (Hypocrisy)."*  
*Special thanks to Andy Stanley, Nelson Searcy, and R.A. Pegrum for outlines and ideas for this worship series.*